

VIRGINIA ROANOKE RIVER BASIN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
March 20, 2003
South Boston – Halifax County Museum of Fine Arts and History

Attendance: All VRRBAC members except Rep. Goode, Senator Hawkins, Del. Byron, Del. Hurt, Del. Thomas, Del. Wright, Robert Conner, and Mike McEvoy; DEQ: G. Anderson; DCR: Tim Ott

Call to Order:

Chairman Feild called the meeting to order.

Welcome:

Marjorie Holtman, Director of the South Boston – Halifax County Museum of Fine Arts and History welcomed the Committee, guests, and visitors to South Boston and the Museum. She provided information about the museum and the exhibit "Living Along the Staunton River".

Recognition of Visitors:

Chairman Feild introduced all members, staff, and visitors. Notable guests included Jerry Lovelace, Halifax County, J. T. Davis, Friends of the Staunton River, Tom Stutts, South Boston-Halifax County, and Doug Ford, The Gazette Virginian. Maureen Castern represented Mike McEvoy at the meeting. She is also Chairman of the Upper Roanoke River Round-table Board of Directors.

Moment of Silence for Ken Dugan:

Charles Poindexter informed the group of the passing of member Ken Dugan. A moment of silence was observed.

February 26, 2003 meeting minutes:

A motion was made to approve the minutes with minor amendments. The motion was seconded and passed.

Future Meeting Plan

- Chairman Feild addressed the plan for future meetings. The Committee meetings will continue on a monthly basis for now and the location will be move on up the basin. This schedule will allow the remainder of the localities to have a good opportunity to express their concerns/ideas to the group. At the point in time when the basin has been covered adequately and the sub-committees are operating, the full Committee will meet less often. A bi-monthly or quarterly meeting schedule will probably be sufficient.
- A discussion ensued concerning the standard meeting date of VRRBAC. The belief expressed was that the Committee needed to meet in a fashion that promoted the participation of all Committee members. A motion was made, seconded, and passed that the Chairman would set future meeting dates. When polling for meeting dates is used as the process to determine the meeting date and/or location, members must respond quickly to the poll request. It will be assumed after one week that anyone who has not responded can attend all choices of dates and/or location.
- The Chairman is relying on local members to help secure local meeting arrangements.

Standing Sub-committees:

- Mr. Eddy asked if there was any guidance to be used by the sub-committees. Chairman Field indicated that the functioning of the sub-committees would be left up to the responsible Chairman. However, they should involve local participation from throughout the basin so that all local interests are represented. In turn these local interests will guide the work of the sub-committees. In the formation of these sub-committees, an effort was made to effect a geographical balance and to parallel the structure of the NC counterpart so that the groups can easily interface with each other. Other outside people will also serve to provide local insight and technical expertise. These members may serve as their particular skills are needed.
- It was pointed out that Mr. Dugan was Chairman of the Water sub-committee and served on the River Interests sub-committee. How would his sub-committee assignments be handled and how soon would someone be appointed to his seat on the Committee. According to the establishing legislation, legislative members of the VRRBAC choose citizen members from recommendations made by the Planning Districts. At this time there is no clear timetable for this process.
- A motion was made, seconded, and passed that the sub-committee Chairman presents their agenda, a member list, meeting frequency, and operating goals at the next VRRBAC meeting. Greg Anderson was to inform Robert Conner of this motion.

Stan Smith, Roanoke River Basin Water Conservation Alliance (RRBWCA); “Overview of RRBWCA”

Charles Poindexter introduced Mr. Stan Smith who spoke to the group about the Roanoke River Basin Water Conservation Alliance (RRBWCA). Much of the information can be viewed at the web-site <http://www.lynchburg.net/smla/page6.htm> Highlights of the very informative presentation are as follows:

- RRBWCA was formed in early 2002 to find a better process to manage water levels in Smith Mountain Lake/Leesville system to support downstream and upstream uses. This effort began after DEQ and AEP were unsuccessful in their attempts to gain a consensus on how to improve decision making on releases.
- RRBWCA has a skilled modeler in the group who has developed a model that has been tested and proved to work very well for water levels in SML. The model is based on inflows and outflow measurements made by AEP.
- There have been several papers produced by members of the group. The papers cover topics associated with water releases from the lake based on conditions, withdrawals, and management priorities. The papers are described at the above web-site and are available upon request from the Lake Association office at (540) 297-4146.
- The Alliance has developed a list of priorities to be considered when a new flow protocol is developed in times of low flow input. This list is available at the website.
- The group is hoping that an in-stream flow study will be conducted by USGS of the entire basin. Representative Goode is seeking funding for this study.
- There was a discussion about involving the entire basin in dialogue concerning the regulation of flow anywhere in the basin. There has been some concern during the recent drought and subsequent regulation of SML levels that the lower basin lake representatives were not part of the discussion. There seems to be a perception that impacts on the lower basin fall on Federal interests and not the public. Mr. Smith indicated RRBWCA wanted to extend dialogue throughout the basin. In fact they

Stan Smith, Roanoke River Basin Water Conservation Alliance (RRBWCA); “Overview of RRBWCA”(continued)

have participated in the USACOE meetings as a step in that direction. The Alliance is well aware that changes in flow at SML/Leesville can impact the basin elsewhere. The group was not insensitive to the downstream requirements but there was really no impact from the control of Smith Mt. Lake levels. This was due to the fact that the inflows to SML were not dominant, rather the flows entering below Leesville were dominant. J. T. Davis stated that the key to solving the basin's issues was the development of a comprehensive water policy. The Water Alliance was a good start on promoting dialogue throughout the basin. All stakeholders must get involved and work together to influence political action to solve problems. These water issues are only going to get more complicated. The Virginia Beach pipeline was given as an example of bad policy that was implemented because the region just did not have the votes. It is through involvement and dialogue that such bad policy is stopped. Had basin-wide dialogue and involvement occurred at the time of the pipeline proposal it might not be there today.

- Chairman Field said he had heard that there might be some 50/50 cost share opportunities through the USACOE for localities who want to conduct studies outside the 216 study process. The importance of using technical science to support issues was noted.
- Lee Eddy asked how much consideration is given by AEP to power generation in these level decisions? He was answered that the market is changing because of deregulation and AEP will probably be a different company to deal with two years from now. It may be a more difficult negotiation at that time. AEP was quick to point out that generation of electricity was of prime importance during the recent interactions. However, AEP was applauded for being very helpful and more than willing to make concessions during this time. The recent mode of dam operation is that it is brought on line when rates are high. When the market drops they use the electricity to pump the water back up. Recently the SML levels generally decrease during the week and the water is pumped back on the weekends. The pump back has been relatively slow due to their biggest pump being out of operation. This is in contrast to the original peak load operation. The point was made that AEP must generate based on the license. Therefore, it is important the Committee effectively influences the 2009 FERC re-licensing effort so that basin wide concerns are recognized and addressed. Having a good dialogue up and down the basin will be instrumental in making a difference. The fact that downstream users were able to get AEP to adopt a flow regime that reduced a 5 ft. fluctuation in downstream flows to essentially level flows is a further example of what can be accomplished if people get involved. Such involvement can influence what is done at the federal level.
- Mention was made of the controversial shoreline management plan that is being developed at Smith Mountain Lake. AEP still owns some property and has easements on most of the remaining property. They are developing this plan as a part of the FERC re-licensing process.
- There was some discussion of invasive species. The snakehead fish is not a problem but hydrilla and zebra mussels are. These species have no impact on power generation but do on other uses such as recreation.

Reimbursement Issue:

Senator Hawkins had asked at the last meeting that Greg Anderson, DEQ, look into DEQ reimbursing members for expenses. Pertinent State Code includes 62.1-69.34 and 2.2-2813. Greg discussed this with DEQ Central Office staff and found that DEQ did not have available funds at this time. Management may consider reimbursement for mileage if any funds are identified. SB1315 dealing with collegial bodies including this Committee and the Bi-State Commission passed the House and Senate this session. This bill

Reimbursement Issue (continued):

changed some of the legislation establishing this Committee and the Bi-State Commission. It also contained provisions for DEQ to compensate and reimburse members for expenses. However, this reimbursement is contingent upon DEQ being provided appropriations from the legislature. Senator Hawkins is working on this issue and wants the members to keep track of their mileage.

John H. Kerr 216 Study Sponsor's Advisory Committee Representation:

Greg Anderson indicated that Dave Paylor, Secretary of Natural Resources Office, had informed him that a VRRBAC representative would likely be invited to the next Sponsor's Advisory Committee meeting. At this point the meeting has not been scheduled.

Future Meeting Dates/Locations:

- A motion was made, seconded, and passed that the next meeting will be held on April 23 in Roanoke. The meeting location has since been secured. The location will be at the Spring Hollow Water Treatment Plant.
- Rappahannock River Basin Commission Coordinator Eldon James is tentatively scheduled as a speaker. Other suggestions are a presentation by Maureen Castern on the Upper Roanoke River Roundtable and a tour of the Spring Hollow off-stream reservoir facilities.
- Another motion was made, seconded, and passed that the following monthly meeting will be held in Brookneal. Bud Laroche, DGIF is tentatively scheduled for a speaker. Also a tour of Hatchery operations is proposed.
- A third future meeting will likely be arranged in the Danville area.

Adjournment/Museum Tour:

The meeting was adjourned. Tom Stutts and Gerald Gilliam then spoke to Committee members and visitors on the development and history of the "Living Along the Staunton River" exhibit. The members then viewed the exhibit, which was appreciated by all.